

Witness: Michael T. Smith
Request from: Department of Telecommunications and Energy

Question:

Please provide, for all gas and electric companies in the United States with a telephone answering performance measure, a description of the measure, the name of company, and the docket or other citation where the measure was adopted.

Response:

WMECO has a telephone answering performance measure included in its service quality plan, approved by the Department in DTE 01-71D. The measure is based on the percentage of calls answered within 20 seconds. The current benchmark is based on WMECO's historical performance data from 1997 to 2004. The other gas and electric distribution companies within Massachusetts also have a telephone answering performance measure included in their respective service quality plans, promulgated by the Department in DTE 99-84.

WMECO's affiliated electric companies in Connecticut and New Hampshire -- The Connecticut Light and Power Company (CL&P) and Public Service Company of New Hampshire (PSNH) -- do not have service quality plans, but use the identical measure for internal performance management. The current benchmarks (performance targets) for CL&P and PSNH are 78% and 86% of calls answered in 20 seconds respectively.

WMECO's affiliated gas company in Connecticut -- Yankee Gas -- has a telephone answering performance measure included in its service quality assurance program described in the Connecticut Department of Public Utility Controls Final Order in DPUC Docket No. 01-05-19. The measure is Average Speed of Answer (ASA), the average number of seconds it takes for each call to be answered by a customer service representative. Yankee's current benchmark is 27.1 seconds.

The Company does not have specific data on telephone answering performance measures for any other companies in the United States.

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Question:

Please discuss the feasibility of adopting a telephone answering performance measure described below:

- (a) Eighty percent of telephone calls answered within 30 seconds, as defined by a customer receiving and selecting between the option to receive automated information (e.g., account balance) and speaking with a customer service representative;
- (b) Eighty percent of telephone calls answered within 40 seconds, with the same parameters as in (a);
- (c) Eighty percent of telephone calls answered within 60 seconds, with the same parameters as in (a);
- (d) Seventy-five percent of telephone calls answered within 30 seconds, with the same parameters as in (a);
- (e) Seventy-five percent of telephone calls answered within 40 seconds, with the same parameters as in (a);
- (f) Seventy-five percent of telephone calls answered within 60 seconds, with the same parameters as in (a);
- (g) Seventy-five percent of telephone calls answered within 20 seconds, with the same parameters as in (a).

Response:

Each of the telephone answering performance measures are feasible. The Company believes that additional discussion is needed to balance Department objectives, Company costs and customer needs before changing the currently-established performance measure that was decided upon after considerable analysis.